



# Code of Ethical Conduct for Prevention Professionals

---

Adapted from the Prevention Think Tank, Inc.  
(Revised November 2017)

## **Preamble:**

The Prevention Code of Ethical Conduct principles are models of exemplary professional behavior. These principles express prevention professionals' recognition of responsibilities to the public, to service recipients, and to colleagues within and outside of the prevention field. They guide prevention professionals in the performance of their professional responsibilities and express the basic tenets of ethical and professional conduct. Prevention professionals shall adhere to the same principles of professionalism online as they would offline. The principles call for honorable behavior, even at the sacrifice of personal advantage. These principles shall not be regarded as limitations or restrictions, but as goals toward which prevention professionals shall constantly strive. They are guided by core values and competencies that have emerged with the development of the prevention field.

## **Principles:**

### **Principle 1: Nondiscrimination.**

A prevention professional shall not discriminate against service recipients or colleagues based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic condition or physical, medical or mental disability. A prevention professional shall broaden their understanding and acceptance of cultural and individual differences, and in doing so, render services and provide information sensitive to those differences.

### **Principle 2: Competency.**

Prevention professionals shall master their prevention specialty's body of knowledge and skill competencies, strive continually to improve personal proficiency and quality of service delivery, and discharge professional responsibility to the best of their ability. Competence includes a synthesis of education and experience combined with an understanding of the cultures within which prevention application occurs. The maintenance of competence requires continual learning and professional improvement throughout one's career.

- A.** Professionals shall be diligent in discharging responsibilities. Diligence imposes the responsibility to render services carefully and promptly, to be thorough, and to observe applicable technical and ethical standards.
- B.** Due care requires a professional to plan and supervise adequately and evaluate to the extent possible any professional activity for which he or she is responsible.
- C.** A prevention professional shall recognize limitations and boundaries of competencies and not use techniques or offer services outside of his or her competencies. Each professional is responsible for assessing the adequacy of his or her own competence for the responsibility to be assumed. When asked to perform such services, a prevention professional shall, to the best of their ability, refer to an appropriately qualified professional. When no such professional exists, a prevention professional shall clearly notify the requesting person/organization of the gap in services available.

- D. Ideally, prevention professionals shall be supervised by competent senior prevention professionals. When this is not possible, prevention professionals shall seek peer supervision or mentoring from other competent prevention professionals.
- E. When a prevention professional has knowledge of unethical conduct or practice on the part of an agency or prevention professional, he or she has an ethical responsibility to report the conduct or practices to funding, regulatory or other appropriate bodies.
- F. A prevention professional shall recognize the effect of impairment on professional performance and shall be willing to seek appropriate professional assistance for any form of substance misuse, psychological impairment, emotional distress, or any other physical related adversity that interferes with their professional functioning.
- G. Prevention professionals shall not permit students, employees, or supervisees to perform or to hold themselves out as competent to perform professional services beyond their training, level of experience and competence.
- H. Prevention professionals who supervise others accept the obligation to facilitate further professional development of these individuals by providing accurate and current information, timely evaluations, and constructive consultation.

### **Principle 3: Integrity.**

To maintain and broaden public confidence, prevention professionals shall perform all responsibilities with the highest sense of integrity. Personal gain and advantage shall not subordinate service and the public trust. Integrity can accommodate the inadvertent error and the honest difference of opinion. It cannot accommodate deceit or subordination of principle.

- A. All information shall be presented fairly and accurately. Each professional shall document and assign credit to all contributing sources used in published material or public statements.
- B. Prevention professionals shall not misrepresent either directly or by implication professional qualifications or affiliations.
- C. Where there is evidence of impairment in a colleague or a service recipient, a prevention professional shall be supportive of assistance or treatment.
- D. Prevention professionals shall not be associated directly or indirectly with any service, products, individuals, and organizations in a way that is misleading.
- E. Prevention professionals shall cooperate with the Ethics Committee of the Prevention Specialist Certification Board of Washington.

If a Prevention Professional is found to have committed an ethical violation by another discipline or jurisdiction, the Prevention Professional must immediately report the violation to the Ethics Committee of the Prevention Specialist Certification Board of Washington.

### **Principle 4: Nature of Services.**

Practices shall do no harm to service recipients. Services provided by prevention professionals shall be respectful and non-exploitive.

- A. Services shall be provided in a way that preserves the protective factors inherent in each culture and individual.
- B. Prevention professionals shall use formal and informal structures to receive and incorporate input from service recipients in the development, implementation and evaluation of prevention services.
- C. Where there is suspicion of abuse of children or vulnerable adults, the prevention professional shall report the evidence to the appropriate agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken.

**Principle 5: Confidentiality.**

Confidential information acquired during service delivery shall be safe guarded from disclosure, including – but not limited to – verbal disclosure, unsecured maintenance of records, or recording of an activity or presentation without appropriate releases. Prevention professionals are responsible for knowing the confidentiality regulations relevant to their prevention specialty.

**Principle 6: Ethical Obligations for Community and Society.**

According to their consciences, prevention professionals shall be proactive on public policy and legislative issues. The public welfare and the individual’s right to services and personal wellness shall guide the efforts of prevention professionals to educate the general public and policy makers. Prevention professionals shall adopt a personal and professional stance that promotes health.

Prevention Professionals shall be aware of their local and national regulations regarding lobbying and advocacy, and act within the laws and funding guidelines.

**I have read and understand the Prevention Code of Ethical Conduct and will adhere to and honor this Code to the best of my ability.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Name (Printed)